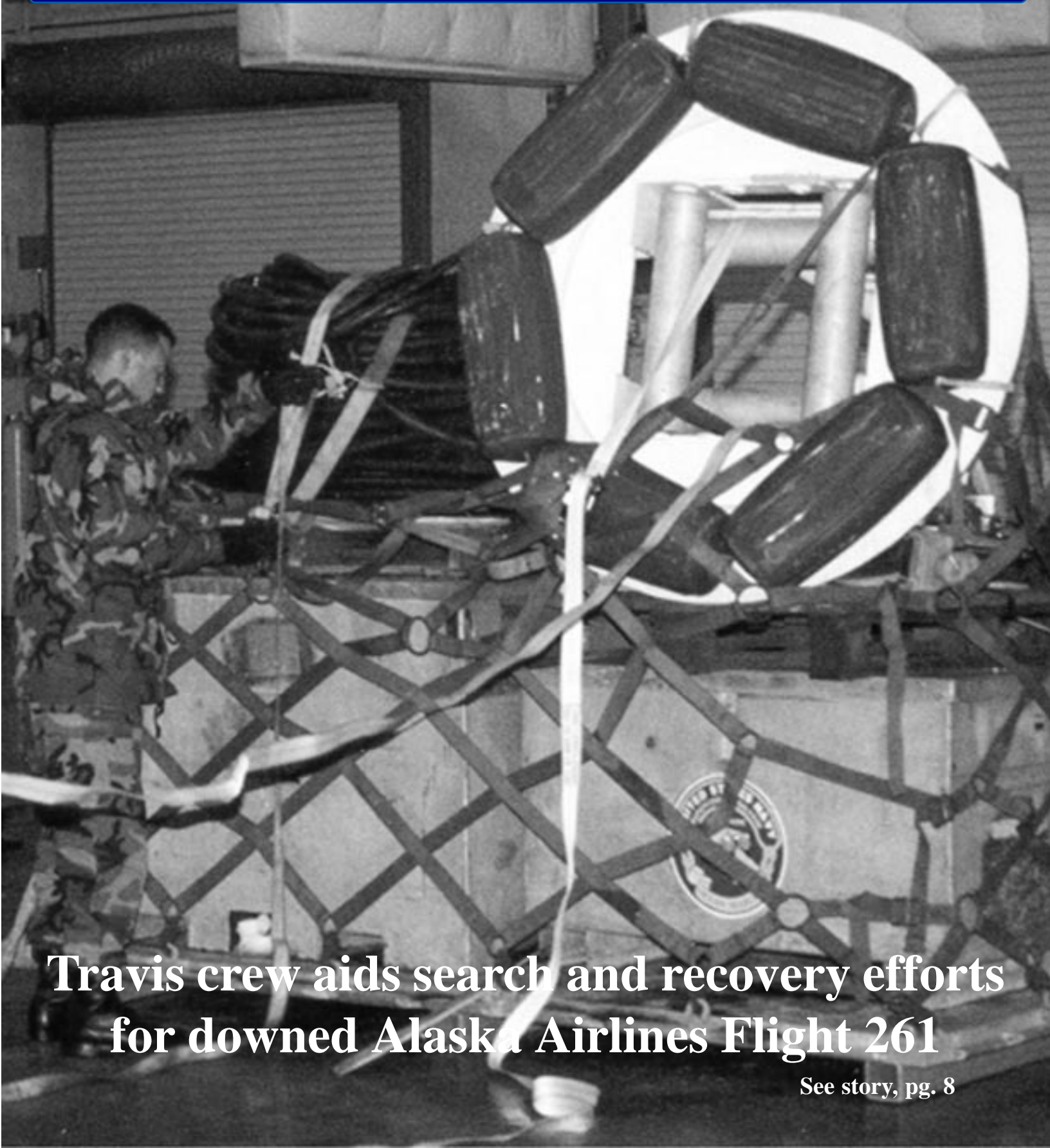


Contact

Magazine for and about members of the 349th Air Mobility Wing
Travis Air Force Base, California

Vol. 18, No. 2

February 2000



**Travis crew aids search and recovery efforts
for downed Alaska Airlines Flight 261**

See story, pg. 8

Commander's corner

by Brig. Gen. (Select) Gerald A. Black
349th AMW Commander

Incredible—it's only February and once again the 349th is off to a galloping start in this new year. Inspections and deployments are already upon us, and of course, the missions have never ceased. I'd like to take this space to reflect on a particular deployment slated for this spring, because I believe it exemplifies the very core of this wing in particular, and the Air Force Reserve in general.

Last spring, our KC-10 squadrons participated, for the second time, in a 45-day rotation in Southeast Asia, giving the active duty a welcome break from overseas duty. Along with the tankers and maintenance, various other wing members deployed, some for the full duration, others for shorter stays.

The duty was tedious and uncomfortable. Living conditions were spartan, to say the least (sand, tents, and portable showers get old very quickly!). And to top it off, this was one of those missions that, by design, garnered minimal, if any, publicity, and certainly little recognition of a job well done. But we did well, and guess what, we're going back there to do it again. Why? Because that's our

job.

More and more this is life in the Reserve. Once the TV lights are turned off and the reporters hustle on to the next crisis, disaster or calamity, we settle in for the long haul.

Just recently, a C-141 took off from Haiti, carrying a solitary soldier and a few thousand tons of equipment, officially ending Operation Uphold Democracy. There was little fanfare, and very little interest from the media, certainly nothing to compare to the uproar created by the original action six years ago. But we were there the entire time, as we still are in so many parts of the world. We do the job quietly and efficiently, expecting little in the way of thanks or gratitude.

As the demand upon the military grows, and the force increasingly scrambles to attract and keep quality people, the Reserve's part of the mission will continue to expand. We are an "active" force, in fact, if not in name, and that will become a bigger challenge for us as time goes on. Missions will continue to come our way, and we will have to look upon our role in a different light as the lines continue to blur between the full-timer and the part-timer. It truly is a new era for us all. ✈



Command Chief Master Sergeant's corner

by Chief Master Sgt. Anthony L. Maddux
349th AMW Command Chief Master Sergeant

Our 349th AMW Enlisted Workshop held Jan. 27-28, was a huge success. It was a very special event that I believe was long overdue. The theme of the workshop was quality of life and retention. These are very important issues because they impact the readiness of the Total Force and that is why all the services were represented.

Our goal was to share information and concerns and then develop a "point paper." Command Sergeant Major Collin Younger has already received the point paper and has agreed to champion our concerns at the Pentagon. This was also a great opportunity for many of our people to finally meet one another. Most importantly, this workshop allowed people to network their concerns, exchange ideas and benchmark information.

Many people worked very hard to make this workshop a reality. I would like to recognize and thank these people. Chief Master Sgt. Karen Redd, the overall coordinator, volunteered to take on this most difficult task and provided constant valuable insight and leadership.

I would also like to thank Chief Master Sgt. Larry Wynn, Senior Master Sgt. Patricia McReynolds, Master Sgt.

David Newman, Master Sgt. Mark Trovinger, Master Sgt. Martin Walker, Technical Sgt. Gina Jensen, Technical Sgt. Mary Johnson, Staff Sgt. Robert Ivey and Staff Sgt. Wade Wells, and the many other individuals in our wing who assisted with their ideas, skill, determination and dedication. Their efforts made this all possible.

And a special thanks to the speakers who provided us with useful and pertinent information. Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jim Finch made his first visit to Travis Air Force Base, and Army, Marine, Navy and Coast Guard Command E-9s provided valuable information regarding quality of life issues in their respective services. The many civilian dignitaries did an equally outstanding job. Everyone was very impressed at the level and number of these invited speakers who honored our wing with their professionalism, knowledge and inspiring words. I encourage each person who attended this workshop to share this information with his or her unit. ✈



Contact



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Catch up on the latest Air Force, AFRC and 349th AMW news.



COVER PHOTO:

Members from the 312th Airlift Squadron and 22nd Airlift Squadron load Navy search and recovery equipment on a C-5 Galaxy.

(Photo by Capt. Jeff Daniels, 312th AS)

Congratulations Brig. Gen. Gerald A. Black

Staff Sergeant wins best of the best

A 349th Component Repair Squadron specialist is the 349th's Airman of the Year for 1999. Staff Sergeant Zachary D. Patterson, a



guidance and control repairman, was cited not only for his expertise, but his enthusiasm and self-motivation. Patterson troubleshooted and repaired a defective tape drive assembly on a malfunctioning C-5 aircraft autopilot

test station which had eluded technicians during two previous shifts, increasing the C-5 repair capability by fifty percent. During his annual tour, he trained newly assigned active duty personnel and was applauded by the active duty supervisor as one of the first reserve airman to provide such in-depth, quality instruction. He completed his seven-level with a 100 percent average and recently completed a 35-hour teaching internship in the Solano Community College Electronics Department. Patterson is an active supporter of the squadron

booster club on base and also donates time to Fairfield Boys and Girls Club and the Vacaville Counterforce drug prevention program. In civilian life, Patterson, an employee of Kaiser Permanente, has recently been promoted to Business Analyst on the Appointment and Advice Call Center Project for Northern California. "His technical knowledge, total dedication to duty and willingness to assist in any capacity have made him a valuable member of the 349th CRS," stated Maj. Geraldine Bishop, 349th CRS commander. ✈

AFRC winner for Military Equal Opportunity

Maj. Christopher W. Clay, 349th AMW Military Equal Opportunity

AFRC winner for Public Affairs Entry-Level Civilian

Patti Holloway, 349th AMW Public Affairs

AFRC winner for Air Force Education and Training Manager

Technical Sgt. Betty C. Maldonado, 349th Logistics Support Squadron

349th Logistics Group Maintenance winners for 4th Quarter 1999

**Senior Master Sgt. Rudy J. Perez (349th CRS)
Senior NCO of the Year**

**Technical Sgt. Arthur Garza (349th EMS)
NCO of the year**

**Senior Airman Anthony R. Alvarado (749th AGS)
Airman of the year**

Protecting our military against Anthrax

by William S. Cohen
Secretary of Defense

One of the clearest responsibilities of any secretary of defense is to protect the men and women the United States deploys in harm's way around the world to safeguard our national interests. That is why I, acting on the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, decided to start vaccinating every member of the military against exposure to anthrax.

In 1996, the Joint Chiefs of Staff identified anthrax as the number one biological threat to our troops. After the Gulf War, United Nations inspectors confirmed that Iraq had produced thousands of gallons of anthrax and deployed it in missile warheads, artillery shells and spray tanks for use from airplanes. As a weapon of mass destruction, anthrax is cheap and much easier to develop than nuclear munitions.

Fortunately, Iraq did not use anthrax against our troops during Desert Storm in 1991, but we can't expect that future adversaries, including terrorists, would not do so. At a time when the U.S. maintains clear conventional military superiority, enemies will be tempted to turn to unconventional weapons, such as anthrax, as a way to defeat our troops.

Although anthrax is highly deadly, we have developed protective

equipment and medicines to secure the safety of our troops. In 1970, the Food and Drug Administration licensed a vaccine to protect humans who might be exposed to anthrax.

After evaluating the anthrax threat and the safety of the vaccine, the general who commands U.S. troops in the Middle East and the commander of the 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea, who face an anthrax threat, requested that all troops stationed or deployed to these areas be vaccinated for anthrax protection.

The Joint Chiefs reviewed these and recommended mandatory anthrax vaccination for all 2.4 million active and reserve members of our military. They reasoned that force protection should not be optional; just as it is inconceivable to allow a soldier to fight without a helmet, it makes little sense to send a soldier into battle without protection against a known threat like anthrax.

I supported the recommendation of our military leaders. But before launching the vaccination program, I took steps to make sure that we were prepared. Complaints that the Department of Defense mishandled exposure to Agent Orange and the illnesses suffered by some veterans following the Gulf War in 1991 damaged the military's credibility on medical issues. We have worked hard to correct and learn from these experiences.

As a result, I decided to delay vaccinations until four conditions were met. First, I ordered supplemental testing, consistent with FDA standards, to assure that the vaccine supplies are sterile, safe, potent and pure.

Second, I instructed the services to design a system that accurately tracks personnel who received the six shots required in the vaccination program.

Third, I required the services to develop plans for educating people about the program and administering the immunizations.

Finally, I ordered an independent review of the health and medical protocols of the program. This was performed by Dr. Gerald Burrow, the highly respected former dean of the Yale Medical School, who assisted the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses. Gen. Hugh Shelton, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and I were among the first to receive the shots. We experienced the same mild side effects that many others feel.

The military does not want to lose a single member because of concerns over this program. But most of all, we don't want to run the risk of losing thousands of men and women in uniform from an anthrax attack for which we are unprepared. The threat is real, and we are carrying out a prudent, safe program to counter the dangers our troops face. ✈

Employer Day Dates:

Medical Group - April 8

**POC: Chief Master Sgt. Mark Kloeppel
(707) 424-1643**

Operations Group - May 13

**(70th ARS, 312th AS, 349th AES)
POC: Chief Master Sgt. Karen Redd
(707) 424-7003**

Support Group - July 8

**POC: Technical Sgt. David Muller or
Capt. Heather Capella
(707) 424-3737**

Operations Group - July 22

**(79th ARS, 301st AS)
POC: Lt. James Harty
(707) 424-3696 or
Maj. Mark Kleinman
(707) 424-7902**

Logistics Group - Sept. 23

**POC: Senior Master Sgt.
Theresa Matusick
(707) 424-2060**

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force discusses enlisted issues with reservists

by Capt. Tania L. Daniels

"This has been a pretty good year for the military with the focus being brought back onto the military; that's a good news story," the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force told more than 300 Reservists on Jan. 28 at the 349th Air Mobility Wing's Senior Enlisted Workshop.

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jim Finch, America's 13th CMSAF, outlined the new Expeditionary Aerospace Force, the changing Air Force image and the important role the Air Force Reserve plays in the total force, in his first visit to Travis since taking on his new position.

As the senior enlisted member of the Air Force, Finch is adviser to the chief of staff and the secretary of the Air Force on matters concerning the effective utilization, welfare and progress of the enlisted members of the Air Force. "We are better off today, as we start the year 2000, than a couple of years ago," observed Finch. He then went on to

explain the new EAF concept and what it will mean to the service.

"Throughout the 1990s, we've been an expeditionary force but we didn't know how to organize ourselves to fit that concept," said Finch. "Now we're learning how to best make this concept work. We've

“When I retire I will ask myself, ‘was I a better person for being in the Air Force?’ I’ve done things in the Air Force I would never have been able to do as a civilian. In the end, it’s not the money but the experiences that make you who you are. ”

learned some from the first couple of Aerospace Expeditionary Forces and we'll keep learning. We know we'll have hiccups but as we work through this, the important part is that we have

an avenue available to us to figure out how to make the EAF better. And I want to make it clear that as we transition to the EAF, the Reserve and Guard will play a big role."

The EAF will be a whole new way of doing business for the Air Force, Finch pointed out. "It will be a culture shift for all of us. And so the question must be asked, 'How do we change the culture of the Air Force?'"

The Chief then went on to outline some of the ways that the culture is being changed. "We're making strides to change the culture, one being the changes made to BMT," said Finch. "I'm talking about the addition of Warrior Week. For new recruits, the fifth week of basic training is now completed in a deployed environment." This will better equip them for what they will be experiencing when they enter the Air Force. "Another way to change the culture is to target professional development or PME," Finch explained. "I'm very pleased with our senior NCO corp. I've seen a big difference over the last six years in the way we orient our new chiefs and in the new senior NCO orientation programs that I see at many of the bases I visit."

Regarding the issues that Finch sees as most important to the Air Force, the Chief pointed to four primary ones: increased work load, shortage of skilled 5-levels, recruiting and retention. "There's an overabundance of 3-levels and a shortage of 5-levels who are the ones with the skills necessary to do the actual work," Finch pointed out to his audience.

"We continue to have more work but not enough people. So how do we fix this? It centers around manning," answered Finch. "We have to build from the future, thus our continued emphasis on recruiting



Chief Master Sgt. Finch explains how the Expeditionary Aerospace Force is changing the Air Force image with reservists.

more people and retaining them. These are two of our biggest concerns.

"In the Air Force we didn't make our 1999 recruiting goal," Finch pointed out. "What are some of our possible solutions? Enlistment bonuses have been introduced. And we've started advertising on television and in other new markets. We're benchmarking from the other services, especially the Marines, on this one. We also continue to look at outsourcing and privatization as a way to lessen our workload."

With this said, Finch proceeded to field questions from the audience. One question concerned the idea of bringing back warrant officers. In response, Finch questioned whether this was the direction the Air Force wanted to go. "We do have a very educated enlisted corps but I'm not so sure that it's just education that makes an officer. It's the leadership as well," he commented. "We need to instead look at how we can increase

the level of compensation for our enlisted corps. And I assure you we are continuing to work towards improvement in that area."

Mid-level management dissatisfaction



Chief Master Sgt. Finch discusses recruiting and retention issues in the Air Force Reserve.

was the topic of another question. Chief Finch addressed his

opinion on keeping these essential workers in the Air Force.

"The Air Force is not just about money. You have to balance everything when deciding whether to stay in," he observed. "When I retire I will ask myself, 'was I a better person for being in the Air Force?' I've done things in the Air Force I would never have been able to do as a civilian. In the end, it's not the money but the experiences that make you who you are."

"Today, it doesn't matter whether you're active duty, Reserve or Guard," Finch pointed out. "What matters is having great people, all pushing in the same direction, trying to get great things done for our country. That's what counts."✈

"We do have a very educated enlisted corps but I'm not so sure that it's just education that makes an officer. It's the leadership as well."

Tax center available for reservists

by Staff Sgt. Shayne Sewell

Once again tax season is upon us. If you meet the following criteria the tax center can help: aside from military income do you have federal government income, non-federal government income, gambling winnings, dividends (stock/mutual funds), interest (savings/checking accounts), sale of stock, mutual funds, bonds, self-employed day care provider, child care expenses, IRA contributions, ROTH IRA conversion? If so, the tax center can help.

Reservists and their dependents

are welcome to use the tax center services for federal income tax assistance. Tax center volunteers are

Things to bring to the tax center:

- Social Security card
- Dependent's Social Security card
- Military ID card
- Voided check
- All W-2 forms
- W-2G forms
- 1099 forms
- 1998 tax return

also able to assist with California State taxes but work primarily with federal income tax.

The tax center is comprised of volunteers and is located at the Travis Air Force Base Health and Welfare Center, next to the Base Bowling Alley, and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tax services are available by appointment, but walk-in's are accepted and encouraged between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. when the center is less crowded.

Please call the tax center to make an appointment at (707) 424-4041. You do not have to be in uniform or on orders to use the tax center.

Again, walk-ins are accepted on first-come, first-serve basis, however, at times the wait could be long.✈

Reserve C-5 crew assists with search operations

by Capt. Tania L. Daniels

The Travis Team responded to a call Feb. 1 to airlift equipment being used in the search and recovery efforts for Alaska Airlines Flight 261, which crashed off the Southern California coast Jan. 31.

Members of the Air Force Reserve's 312th Airlift Squadron, along with a pilot from the active duty 22nd Airlift Squadron and three crew chiefs from the 60th Aircraft Generation Squadron, were on a return mission from Europe when they were notified that the oversized airlift capacity of the C-5 was needed.

The crew loaded the U.S. Navy search and recovery equipment aboard the C-5 late at night on Feb. 1 at Andrews AFB, Md., and flew it to Point Mugu Naval Air Station, Calif., arriving at approximately 5 a.m. Pacific time Feb. 2.

The equipment was then loaded aboard a ship and brought to the crash site to aid in the search for wreckage.

The U.S. Navy equipment transported by the C-5 included a Towed Pinger Locator, which is a listening device that can detect the pinger beacons emitted from the flight data and voice recorder mounted in the tail of the downed Alaska Airlines aircraft.

The C-5 also carried the Shallow Water Intermediate Search System, a dual-frequency towed side-scan sonar system, which takes sonographs of the bottom of the ocean to detect the wreckage site.

In addition, a Deep Drone Remotely Operated Vehicle was transported. The ROV is used for deep ocean recovery. As the second largest operational, plane in the world, the C-5 can carry more than 290,000 pounds of cargo and was the natural choice for the 144,000 pounds of Navy search and recovery equipment, said Capt. Jeff Daniels, one of the Reserve C-5 pilots on the mission.

"There have been numerous occasions when heavy and outsized cargo has to be moved rapidly," Daniels said. "The C-5 remains America's first choice for such operations." This highly specialized equipment and the even more specialized Navy personnel that operate it have been involved in many recent high-profile aircraft accidents to include the crash of TWA Flight



PHOTO BY CAPT. JEFF DANIELS

Crewmembers load search and rescue equipment.

800, Swiss Air 111, John F. Kennedy Jr.'s aircraft and the Egypt Air 990. "Our expertise is what we bring to this search operation," said Larry Tyler, assistant project manager in charge of the SWISS.

"We find the location, shape and extent of the debris field, then make a recommendation to the recovery team concerning where to look for the black box and other high interest items." Assistant project manager for the recovery equipment Charles Kapica said, "Every time we get involved I know the importance of my job. Our work helps to determine the cause of the aircraft accident which provides lessons learned to the manufacturer in order to prevent future accidents."

Knowing the importance of their cargo, the C-5 crew did what it takes to get the job done. "We wanted to help these families in whatever capacity we could," said Technical Sgt. Richard Willey, a Reserve loadmaster on the flight. "We volunteered to extend our crew duty day because we knew the importance of this equipment to the search operation." A Reserve associate unit, the 349th AMW flies and maintains C-5 Galaxy and KC-10 Extender aircraft with the 60th AMW, an active-duty unit co-located at Travis. The wing provides worldwide airlift and aerial refueling capabilities. ✈

Members of the 349th and 60th AMW C-5 units load Navy search and recovery equipment on a C-5 Galaxy for shipping to Point Mugu, Calif., in response to the crash of Alaska Airlines Flight 261.



First ones in and last ones out do it all

by Staff Sgt. Shayne Sewell

When most people deploy to a forward location the facilities are set up and command and control is already established, but not for the 349th Airlift Control Flight. They are the ones who establish the initial command and control. In other words, they are the first ones in and the last ones out.

The 349th ALCF is deployed as an Airlift Control Element and serves as the focal point for all airlift activities at an operating location, according to Senior Master Sgt. Rebecca I. Fletcher, TALCE airfield manager. "We set up and manage aircrews and missions that are established through Tactical Airlift Command and Control at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.," said Fletcher. The ALCE is a deployable command post and ensures the appropriate personnel are brought in to accomplish the mission.

The 349th ALCF is a fairly small operation with a commander, operations officer, and other rated TALCE officers who hold various other backgrounds to include aerial port, pilot, navigator or maintenance. Members are specifically trained for short notice mobilizations with a 36-hour initial response time to get to the desired location.

They then have 24 hours to set up command and control. Command and control consists of setting up ground communication and navigation equipment, the mobile command post, and aircraft ground equipment to include generators and vehicles. At the 36-hour point aircraft are launched. It is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week operation at the deployed location.

During the 36-hour mobilization phase, the officers determine the proper support personnel and equipment needed for the specific assignment. Some of the planning factors include type and number of aircraft involved and the hours of

operation. The forward location could be at any base around the world and includes the active duty forces of not only the Air Force, but the Army, Navy and Marines, as well. They participate in joint chief of staff exercises, hurricane relief missions, presidential support missions and have been involved in Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Operation Southern Watch, Operation Provide Comfort, and were in Croatia providing support to the Bosnia mission, just to name a few.

The enlisted personnel play just as big a part as the officers do in the mobilization process. The enlisted



staff include two air reserve technicians, Master Sgt. Craig Saftenberg, affiliation technician and Master Sgt. Janice Lambard, operations supervisor. The enlisted reserve positions include command and control specialists, loadmasters, boom operators, communication navigation specialists, aircraft ground equipment mechanics, and information management specialists.

"The command and control specialists are responsible for ensuring the equipment is set up and command and control is established," said newly assigned, Airman First Class Shirley N. Mamuyac, command and control specialist, 349th ALCF.

The loadmasters and boom operators assigned to the 349th ALCF provide load planning to the deployed aircraft and therefore must be trained

on a variety of aircraft.

The communication navigation specialists work closely with the aircraft ground equipment mechanics to ensure air-to-ground equipment and secure communication is set up from ground zero, and to ensure the ground equipment is set up and working properly. "We physically set up generators and radios at a bare base within two hours in order to establish communication which is part of establishing command and control," said Staff Sgt. Jay C. Spencer, communication navigation specialist.

The information management specialists provide administrative support at the deployed locations and at home station. Newly assigned Staff Sgt. John J. Creedon, information management specialist said, "There is a spirit of togetherness here to get the work done and being such a small squadron we need that spirit."

When the ALCF is not deployed they spend their time training. "As the active duty downsizes the reserves have to step-up," said Maj. Gregory D. Staten, commander, 349th ALCF. "We must maintain readiness. In order to do that we must constantly train," he said.

While at home station the loadmasters and boom operators are affiliation instructors and teach members of the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines how to load plan for various aircraft including the C-5, KC-10, KC-135, C-17, C-141, and civilian aircraft, like the 707, 747, DC-8.

"The courses include equipment preparation, computer aid load manifesting, and air field survey team training to the Department of Energy said," Master Sgt. Cedric W.C. Johnson 349th ALCF loadmaster.

"We're the eyes and ears for the AMC commander at a forward location. Without the expertise and experience of the outstanding 349th ALCF members this unit could not perform its mission," said Staten. ✈

**AIR
FORCE
IDENTITY,
SYMBOL IN
TRANSITION**



WASHINGTON (AFP) — Four weeks ago, U.S. Air Force Online News carried a story about the development and testing of a new Air Force symbol and theme. Although a final decision on the symbol is pending, the secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force chief of staff are aware of the keen interest throughout the force in its ultimate shape, design and meaning. They also want all members of the Air Force family to understand the motivation behind the development of a new and unifying symbol and theme to represent Air Force people and all the important things they do for our nation.

This initiative is not about changing or reinventing the Air Force. It's about ensuring our own people and the public we serve have a clear, consistent understanding of who we are and the value we provide our nation. Because change always causes turbulence, we expect and welcome criticism and advice. To date, we've received input from all parts of the Air Force family and the general public — 10,000 people and counting!

Following is an explanation of what it means, and a website to provide feedback, www.af.mil/newspaper/feedback.htm.

The U.S. Air Force symbol honors the heritage of our past and represents the promise of our future. It retains the core elements of our Air Corps heritage — the "Arnold" wings and star with circle — and modernizes them to reflect our aerospace force of today and tomorrow. The symbol has two main parts. In the upper half, the stylized wings represent the stripes of our strength — the enlisted men and women of our force. They have been drawn with great angularity to emphasize our swiftness and power, and they are divided into six sections which represent our core competencies — aerospace superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority, and agile combat support.

In the lower half there are a sphere, a star and three diamonds. The sphere within the star represents the globe. It reminds us of our obligation to secure our nation's freedom with Global Vigilance, Reach and Power. The globe also reminds us of our challenge as an expeditionary force to respond rapidly to crises and to provide decisive aerospace power, worldwide.

The area surrounding the sphere takes the shape of a star. The star has many meanings. Its five points represent the components of our one force and family — our active duty, civilians, Guard, Reserve and retirees. The star

symbolizes space as the high ground of our nation's aerospace force. The rallying symbol in all our wars, the star also represents our officer corps, central to our combat leadership. The star has been framed with three diamonds, which represent our core values — integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do. The elements come together to form one symbol that presents two powerful images — at once it is an eagle, the emblem of our nation, and a medal, representing valor in service to our nation.

VISA TRAVEL CARD POLICY TAKES EFFECT May 1

WASHINGTON — DOD policy has been finalized which mandates federal employees, including military members, no longer use their personal credit charge cards for authorized expenses while on official government travel.

Use of the government Visa travel card by all federal employees becomes mandatory May 1, according to revised policies dictated by the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998.

"The policy has been formally signed and it's important to get as much information out as possible. We want to provide our people in the field with the latest information we have," said Mr. Michael Weber, card coordinator for the Air Force. Defense Department employees will be required to use the government travel card primarily for hotel costs, car rentals and air travel.

"These services were selected because all major airlines, hotels and car rental companies will accept the government travel card," said Mr. Weber.

"It may be difficult to use the card at some of the smaller merchant stores. For that reason, card use is not required for such expenses as restaurant meals and other miscellaneous incidental items," he said.

The government gets a rebate based on the amount of charges against the card. "That rebate is used by [the Government Services Agency] for manning the program," Mr. Weber said, "and the [Air Force portion] of the rebate is given back to each major command to be put in their travel budget."

Despite the convenience of using the government Visa card, its mandatory use has evoked some criticism. Questions have been asked about the charging of interest rates on overdue balances, especially on long deployments. "By contract, the bank can't charge interest on overdue balances," Mr. Weber said. "That's why we don't call it a credit card — it's a travel card. With a credit card, if you don't pay your balance, interest automatically accrues. The travel card doesn't have that. After 120 days, you would be charged a \$20 late fee, but that's way late in the process."

Base finance offices have two ways of handling the financial interests of those deployed for longer than 60 days. They can either issue an advance up front for the

entire amount entitled for that deployment, or they can send a monthly entitlement to the deployed person's checking account — making the money available to pay off the travel card's balances.

"You have to take some responsibility by planning in advance to make sure this card is paid along with your other personal financial responsibilities, such as rent or car payments," Mr. Weber said. "You can always call the 1-800 number on the back of the card and ask the bank how much you owe; or you could save your receipts, total them up and send the payment in."

As with any form of card, failure to pay the bill in a timely manner can affect credit ratings. When applying for the travel card, service members are afforded some measure of privacy regarding their credit history. If objections are made to credit inquiries from the issuing bank, simply check the block denying access to credit history on the application, and a restricted, limited card will be issued.

The restricted card, which looks like the standard version, must be activated by a designated member of the traveler's unit and it carries a lower spending limit. If the bank is allowed to perform a credit check, the member's credit history will show only that the bank has looked, no other information, such as dollar values, will be posted, Air Force officials said. Other concerns regarding use of the card center around privacy issues on spending habits.

"Some people are concerned about privacy, or giving their Social Security number," Mr. Weber said. "Bank of America, by contract, is not allowed to use any personal financial data except to administer the contract. The bank does not inform the Air Force of an individual's financial credit record."

Although use of the travel card is mandatory, punitive actions for those who fail to use it remains at the unit commander's discretion. "Rumors are going around that if travelers do not use the travel card, they will not be reimbursed on their travel voucher," Mr. Weber said. "Travelers will be reimbursed when vouchers are submitted, regardless of card use. However, by not using the card, they would be in violation of the law and could be subject to disciplinary action. There will be a statement put on the travel order that will reference the law and tell the traveler that he or she must use the travel card," he said. People who are exempt from using the travel card include Air Force Academy cadets, basic military trainees, and airmen attending technical school. There are certain other exemptions that will be explained by base financial officials. But DOD will not accept exemptions just because an individual does not want to use the card.

DOD APPROVES "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL, DON'T HARASS" PLANS

WASHINGTON — DOD has approved service plans to train military personnel in the intricacies of the "don't ask, don't tell, don't harass" homosexual policy.

Service members will receive training in the policy at all levels of professional military training. They will also receive periodic "refresher" training at their units. The top civilians and uniformed members of each service have also issued strong statements highlighting Defense Secretary William Cohen's addition of "don't harass" to the policy. The statements also stress the need for commanders to apply the policy fairly.

"The idea here is to make the training more uniform, to make sure that it's uniform, and to first stress that this policy is part of a nondiscrimination policy in the military," Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said. "It's to make sure that everybody understands exactly what the policy is and what it isn't, what it allows and doesn't allow, and to make sure that this is being communicated uniformly throughout every service." In some cases, the training requirement tells commanders how much time to spend on each section of the policy, Bacon said. The "don't harass" portion of the training will be stressed at first. "If a service member comes to the commander and says, 'I'm being threatened or harassed because people suspect or allege that I am gay,' ... the commander's responsibility is to investigate the threat," said Frank Rush, deputy undersecretary of defense for planning. If there has been a threat or harassment, the commander must take appropriate action against those who threaten or harass.

"Because [the harassment] not only violates the specific direction from the Department of Defense and from the services, it's not conducive to good order and discipline for any service member for any reason not to treat other service members with dignity and respect," Rush said. In December Cohen asked the DOD Inspector General to examine the climate at installations regarding the "don't ask, don't tell, don't harass" policy. Bacon said DOD IG teams are making progress in their review.

"They are asking questions about how well the policy is understood at all levels in the military, from E-1 up to O-10," he continued. "They are also asking how well the policy is implemented and trying to get a sense of the general climate under the 'don't ask, don't tell, don't harass' policy throughout the military."

I wish to thank everyone for their get well wishes, cards, calls and visits during my recent prolonged illness. Several anonymous ARTs and civilians donated their own valuable vacation time to offset my sick leave. Your support really means a lot to me and helped me get through the hospitalizations and recovery. Thank you so much!

—Maj Christine Frank, 349 AES

Officer Promotions



Brigadier General

Gerald A. Black, 349th AMW



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Louis J. Leli, 79th ARS
James P. Lynott, 70th ARS
Peter L. Marcuzzo, 301st AS
Belinda R. Morrone, 349th AES
Frank J. Padilla, 312th AS
Olivia Y. Stringer, 349th CH
Raymond T. Vizzone, 82nd APS
Marilyn A. Welch, 349th CH



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Teresa M. Luchi, 349th MDS
James M. Marsden, Jr. 70th ARS
Mark J. Millican, 312th AS
Kevin J. Morinec, 312th AS
Guy R. Morris, 312th AS
Alan C. Plyler, 349th LSS
Jennifer H. Siu, 349th MDS
Randle W. Suttikus, 349th OSF
Sandra L. Yope, 82nd APS



Captain

Tamra L. Abbott, 349th CH
Regis S. Carr, 349th CH, Det. 1
Martin K. Dotson, 79th ARS
Sandra L. Elenz, 349th CH
Peter J. Gross, 312th AS
Cheryl Y. Inniss, 349th ASTS
William D. Johnston, 349th OSF
Timothy S. Lloyd, 349th AGS
Alice J. Quiroz, 349th ASTS
Halili Josie Quizon, 349th ASTS
Jeffrey M. Severns, 70th ARS
Adams J. Summers, 70th ARS
Kirk Wamsley, 349th AES



1st Lieutenant

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Sam Dixon, 312th AS
Thomas Roads, 349th AES
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